

Welcoming Remarks. James Lee Witt, Director, FEMA

WELCOMING REMARKS

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U.S./JAPAN EARTHQUAKE POLICY SYMPOSIUM  
NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES  
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THANK YOU AND GOOD MORNING, I AM PLEASED  
THAT ALL OF YOU COULD MAKE IT HERE TODAY.  
OUR FRIENDS FROM JAPAN HAVE TRAVELED A  
LONG WAY TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS SYMPOSIUM.  
AND I HAVE HIGH HOPES AND GREAT  
CONFIDENCE THAT THE EXCHANGE OF IDEAS  
THAT TAKES PLACE OVER THE NEXT FEW DAYS  
WILL REWARD THE EFFORTS YOU HAVE MADE  
TO BE HERE.

OUR GOOD FRIEND, VICE PRESIDENT GORE, IS  
VERY DISAPPOINTED THAT HE WILL NOT BE  
ABLE TO JOIN US TODAY. HE ASKED ME TO  
EXTEND HIS BEST WISHES TO ALL OF THE  
SYMPOSIUM PARTICIPANTS AND PARTICULARLY  
TO MINISTER SUZUKI. THE VICE PRESIDENT HAS  
A SPECIAL INTEREST IN THE TOPICS BEING  
DISCUSSED AT THIS SYMPOSIUM AND IS  
INTERESTED IN LEARNING ABOUT THE  
OUTCOME.

THERE ARE NUMEROUS INDIVIDUALS AND  
INSTITUTIONS WITHOUT WHOSE EFFORTS THIS  
SYMPOSIUM WOULD HAVE BEEN IMPOSSIBLE. I  
WOULD LIKE TO THANK, IN PARTICULAR,

MR. KAZUMI SUZUKI, MINISTER OF JAPAN'S NATIONAL LAND AGENCY. MR. SUZUKI LEADS THE JAPANESE DELEGATION, AND HIS AGENCY WAS MY VERY GRACIOUS HOST IN JAPAN WHEN I ARRIVED THERE FOLLOWING THE EARTHQUAKE IN KOBE. I'M VERY GRATEFUL THAT MR. SUZUKI IS HERE BECAUSE I'VE BEEN LOOKING FORWARD TO THIS CHANCE TO LEARN FROM HIM. AMONG OTHER THINGS, I'M WONDERING IF HE HAS SOME TIPS I MIGHT USE WHEN IT'S TIME FOR BUDGET NEGOTIATIONS WITH CONGRESS.

WE'RE ALSO HONORED TO HAVE WITH US TODAY REPRESENTATIVE GEORGE BROWN.

REPRESENTATIVE BROWN IS THE RANKING

MINORITY MEMBER ON THE HOUSE SCIENCE  
COMMITTEE AND A LONGTIME CHAMPION OF  
SCIENTIFIC INNOVATION AND ADVANCEMENT.  
SINCE CONGRESSMAN BROWN REPRESENTS  
CALIFORNIA'S 42nd DISTRICT, NEAR LOS  
ANGELES, HE - LIKE ALL SOUTHERN  
CALIFORNIANS--MAINTAINS A KEEN PERSONAL  
AS WELL AS PROFESSIONAL INTEREST IN THE  
TOPIC OF THIS SYMPOSIUM. GEORGE BROWN  
HAS BEEN THE GUIDING FORCE IN EARTHQUAKE  
HAZARDS REDUCTION FOR A DECADE. WHEN NO  
ONE WANTED TO ACKNOWLEDGE EARTHQUAKES  
AS A POTENTIAL PROBLEM FOR OUR  
COMMUNITIES, CONGRESSMAN BROWN LED THE  
FIGHT FOR A NATIONAL EARTHQUAKE

PROGRAM. HIS VISION WAS A PROGRAM THAT WOULD NOT ONLY FOCUS ON RESEARCH BUT MORE IMPORTANTLY EMPHASIZE TRANSLATING RESEARCH INTO PRACTICAL STEPS A COMMUNITY CAN TAKE TO REDUCE THEIR RISKS FROM EARTHQUAKES. PEOPLE ACROSS THIS WORLD ARE NOW SAFER AND MORE ABLE TO MITIGATE THE IMPACTS OF DEVASTATING EARTHQUAKES BECAUSE OF HIS LEADERSHIP.

I WOULD LIKE TO THANK DR. FRANK PRESS OF THE CARNEGIE INSTITUTION FOR ALL HE HAS DONE TO TRANSFORM THE IDEA OF THIS MEETING OF THE MINDS INTO A REALITY. DR. PRESS, OF COURSE, IS A FORMER PRESIDENT OF

THE NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES AND THE  
FORMER SCIENCE ADVISOR TO PRESIDENT JIMMY  
CARTER. HE HAS ALSO BEEN A PRIMARY  
EXPONENT OVER THE YEARS OF  
STRENGTHENING OUR FRIENDSHIP WITH JAPAN  
IN PRECISELY THE WAY THIS SYMPOSIUM  
INTENDS.

FINALLY, ON BEHALF OF MYSELF AND MY  
TERRIFIC STAFF AT THE FEDERAL EMERGENCY  
MANAGEMENT AGENCY, I WANT TO EXPRESS  
OUR GRATITUDE TO PRESIDENT BILL CLINTON  
AND VICE-PRESIDENT AL GORE. WITHOUT THEIR  
CONSTANT LEADERSHIP AND SUPPORT, WE AT  
FEMA WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO HANDLE THE

CHALLENGES - FROM THE NORTHRIDGE  
EARTHQUAKE TO HURRICANE FRAN -- THAT WE  
FACE ON A REGULAR BASIS.

WHEN PRESIDENT CLINTON AND VICE-PRESIDENT  
GORE ENTERED THE WHITE HOUSE IN 1993, THEY  
WERE DETERMINED TO GIVE THE AMERICAN  
PEOPLE AN EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM  
THEY COULD COUNT ON IN TIMES OF TROUBLE.  
AND THEY HAVE CONTINUED TO DELIVER ON  
THAT COMMITMENT DURING THE PAST THREE-  
AND-A-HALF YEARS.

EACH OF YOU IS HERE - NOT BY ACCIDENT - BUT  
BECAUSE YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN



REDUCING THE EARTHQUAKE RISKS THAT THE  
CITIZENS OF BOTH OUR NATIONS FACE. SO, I  
WANT TO WELCOME ALL OF YOU ONE MORE  
TIME. I BELIEVE THAT, WHEN WE PUT OUR  
HEADS TOGETHER LIKE THIS, WE'RE ALL BOUND  
TO WALK AWAY FROM THIS EXPERIENCE  
PERHAPS A LITTLE SMARTER THAN WHEN WE  
ARRIVED. I KNOW I WILL. AND I LOOK  
FORWARD TO IT.